1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

Kinship groupings: *oluse* and *oluina*.[1] Every Ocimbundu belongs to an *oluse*, i.e. his father's kin, and to an *oluina*, i.e. his mother's kin. Each of these family groupings is divided into male and female lines (*onēlē yohonji*, 'the side of the bow'; *onēlē yohumba*, 'the side of the basket'). Uterine brothers and sisters belong to the same *oluse* and *oluina*, and to the male or female 'side' respectively, according to sex. It is of great importance to get a clear idea of this bilateral nature of these kinship groupings. Every student of ethnology will note the similarity of this division to the Herero *oruzo* and *eanda*.[2] Considering the affinities between the Herero and Umbundu languages, I think that these conceptions are probably related. Further study of other peoples of this Western Bantu zone may reveal cultural and racial as well as linguistic affinities.[3] The *oluse* and *oluina* of the Ovimbundu follow their own pattern.

The *oluse* consists of a large number of local village groups, some of which recognize mutual relationships, but with no recognized headship save in the case of the several royal families. The only suggestion of any totemic relation or origin is with the royal families which have in common several taboos with regard to certain animals the flesh of which may not be eaten, nor the skins used, &c. Chief of these animals are the *ongulungu* (bushbuck, *Tragelaphus scriptus*), the *ocisema*[4] (the waterbuck, *Cobus defessa*

[1] *Olu-se*, perhaps 'the place of father', the root *se* being equivalent to the forms *sa*, *so*, *isia*; *olu-ina*, perhaps 'the place of mother'.

[2] See Vedder, pp. 185 ff. (in *The Native Tribes of South West Africa*): 'The Herero nation is divided into a large family groups . . . the Herero belongs to the *oruzo* of his father and also to the *eanda* of his mother.' J. Irle, *Die Herero* (Gutersloh, 1906), pp. 87–93.

[3] An interesting study of the VaNyaneka, one of the cattle-rearing people living between Ambo and Umbundu territory, was recently published: A. Lang et C. Tastevin, *La Tribu des Va-Nyaneka* (Mission Rohan-Chabot, Tome V), Corbeil: Impr. Créto. This volume was not available in England or the U.S.A. until 1940, and could not therefore have been used in the present study. I may now say, however, that the authors' treatment of the social structure is not such that it would help to solve the problem in question. The clans are described only from the standpoint of totemism. The maternal line of descent (*e-anda*) is briefly mentioned (p. 45), but not the corresponding paternal line. The authors' evident lack of familiarity with other Bantu material is a great drawback. The system used for the transcription of the vernacular is most confusing, owing to an evident lack of understanding of the Bantu phonetic and grammatical genius with consequent procrustean attempts to force it into foreign forms.

[4] The king's sons may not eat flesh of the *ocisema* lest they should *sema sema*, 'have an impediment of speech'. This may be simply a taboo on grounds of *similia similibus* (or the obverse).

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penricei), and *ovinyama viakasa* (animals having paws, from the lion down). No other *oluse* has any such rules. The chief function of the *oluse* is as a local residence group. Within the *oluse* there is no inheritance of property but only succession to office, which from the king to the village headman is from father to son, or from elder to younger brother, with only as much recognition of primogeniture as belongs to the general idea of the hierarchy of age. Succession to office is further affected by the democratic tendencies already noted with regard to the kingly succession.[1] The character of the *oluse* as a series of local groups is further borne out by the character of its priesthood, which lies wholly with the village headmen.

The *oluina* is not a local group, since its members for the most part live in the villages of their several lines of paternal descent—each with his *oluse*. When an Ocimbundu speaks of his family (*epata*) in the sense of a large and widespread organization with a recognized head in some elder, it is generally his *oluina* to which he refers. This family elder (*ukulu wepata*) is generally both the legal and spiritual head of the family. He is the family high-priest in charge of the spirit-hut (*etambo*) of the family guardian spirit (*osande*)[2] of whom there may be more than one and of whom he may become one after death. This family head is generally the eldest in the maternal line. In these days the priestly and the legal functions may be divided considering the advantages of having for legal head one who knows the ways of this world, while the spiritual head needs rather to be acquainted with the spirit-world. Property is inherited through the *oluina* from mother's brother to sister's son.[3] Only the *oluina* is an organization in the wider or more than local sense, and it is to it that the children belong. Formerly the mother's elder brother had great powers over his sister's sons and was even able to pawn them or sell them into slavery to meet his own debts.[4] The patrilocal household is

[1] See *supra*, p. 22 f.

[2] The head of an *oluina* may or may not be a village headman. In case he is, he will be priest of two lines and have two spirit-huts. There may be more than one spirit-hut in a single village.

[3] This fact was noted by A. Bastos, *Traços Geraes sôbre a Ethnografia do Districto de Benguella* (Lisboa, 1909), p. 33 (par. 39°).

[4] This has been noted by a number of writers. Bastos, op. cit., p. 29 (par. 26°) adds that once a father has redeemed his son, the maternal uncle can never sell him again. Cf. *avunculi potestas* among the Ba-Ila, E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples* (London, 1920), vol. i, p. 320.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

The picture of types gathered at Ngalangi (Plate LXXXIX, Fig. 3) shows, reading from left to right along the back row, then along the front row in the same direction: an Ocimbundu; an Ocivokue; a man of the Vangangella; an Uluchazi woman; a Lunda man; and two types of the Vangangella.

The M'Bunda man and woman photographed at Cangamba display characteristic deformation of the upper central incisors (Plate XCI, Figs. 1, 2). Photographs of a Mussurongo man and two women, taken about a hundred miles east of Malange, show no great difference from the Ovimbundu except in their shorter stature (Plates LXX, Figs. 1, 2; LXXI, Figs. 1, 2). The Bushman (Plate LXIX, Figs. 1, 2) shows a type found wandering in small bands in the south of Angola. These photographs were taken at Cassanga.

The dress and personal ornaments of the tribes dwelling to the south of the Ovimbundu (Plates LIX–LXVIII) are entirely different from the clothing and decorative styles observed in the areas occupied by the Ovimbundu. This statement is true with regard to bodily covering, ornaments, tooth mutilation, use of pigment, scarification, and hairdressing.

In respect of all these factors, males and females of the Ovimbundu have distinctive patterns which do not appear to have influenced, or to have been influenced by the styles around them.

In working southward from Elende I passed through typical Umbundu cultures until the vicinity of Kipungo was reached. At this place the change in physical appearance, ornaments, and hairdressing was remarkable both for its abruptness and distinctiveness. But the change from agricultural to pastoral pursuits is gradual.

A comparison of photographs indicates at once the truth of this statement, which can be further illustrated by a detailed description of the ornaments observed from Kipungo to Mongua.

By far the most important of these is the circular *omba* shell made from the basal part of a gastropod shell of the genus *Conus* Linn; and allied forms. These are highly prized, not because of any intrinsic worth, but on account of strong sentiment arising from their bequest, which is usually in the female line. I have, however, seen a few males of the Vakuanyama wearing these shells. For the old *omba* shells monetary offers equal to the earnings of a woman for a period of six months were made, but without success. One woman wavered somewhat, but finally decided that she dared not return to her home without her *omba* shells. From a Portuguese trader I bought, for a small sum, *omba* shells showing stages in manufacture.

825 824 Nature lore of the Ovimbundu rightly forms an introduction to other aspects of economic life, because there is no better introduction to ethnological research in the field than that of associating with the people in daily occupations connected with the food supply and industries. In this way a field worker realizes that observation on the part of hunters and food gatherers is fundamental, not merely to economic and social life, but to the growth of language and folklore.

Observation and experiment have led to the selection of many kinds of timber, each having one or more specific uses. Collection of plants is connected with the making of dyes for baskets, a varnish for pots, and a pharmacopoeia for the medicine-man. Minute observation of the habits of animals, primarily carried out to ensure successful hunting, is clearly reflected in the growth of vocabulary, and likewise in the realism and humor of folk tales and proverbs (chapter VIII). [538]

This chapter is concerned chiefly with a presentation of factual material whose psychological and cultural bearing is more fully dealt with in chapters X–XII.

NATURE LORE

825 The Ovimbundu are keen observers whose knowledge of the natural history of plants and animals is comprehensive. Almost any boy of twelve years of age is able to give the information detailed here. Some of the birds have been identified by Mr. Rudyerd Boulton, Department of Zoology, Field Museum.

Ombo. Ostrich. The knowledge of this bird must come from the south of Angola. In traveling south I first saw ostriches at Humbe. These were domesticated birds.

Epanda. Wattled Crane (*Bugeranus carunculatus*). The informant said, "*Epanda* is a big bird which has long legs and a long neck."

Epumumu. This is the Ground Hornbill (*Bucorvus cafer*) whose black wings are tipped with white. I have observed them from Ganda to Vakuanyama country. They take to flight slowly after hopping heavily for a few paces.

Ocamukongo. From the Umbundu word *ukongo*, a hunter. This bird lives on small buck and rabbits.

Etokailo. This is the smaller bustard called by the Boers knorhaan.

Ohanga. The Guinea Fowl (*Numida meleagris*).

Onjava. Spur-winged Goose (*Plectropterus gambensis*).

Ongonga. An eagle. The word is used generally for a large bird of prey.

Ohokohoko. The Bateleur Eagle (*Terathopius ecaudatus*). The bird is almost without a tail. This bird is not predatory. It kills snakes but does not take chickens or other small animals.

Ociselele. A kite, well known because it preys on chickens.

Etalahanga. A hawk which waits in the trees then volplanes on its prey.

Okapamba. A small hawk which preys on chickens.

Enyamahuti. A hawk.

Ocikuamanga. The White-breasted Crow (*Corvus albus*).

Onguali (*ng-wa*). This is the Red-necked Partridge (*Pternistis afer*).

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

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Ekalenga. A species of francolin without red coloring on the legs.

Esusi. This is a bird which comes out at night. It can catch spirits and make them die a second death.

Ovjimbi. This nocturnal owl (*Bubo maculosus*) is thought to be very dangerous. People who hear the cry of this bird are frightened because the noise is the sound of death.

Kocukucuku. The Barn Owl (*Tyto alba affinis*).

Ongongayulombo. An eagle which eats small buck, pigs, and rabbits.

Ekuti. Is a Red-eyed Dove (*Streptopelia semitorquata*) which says "oo–oo–oo" very sharply all day.

Onende. A dove (*Streptopelia capicola*) which makes the same noise as *ekuti* but on a higher note.

Onduva. This bird is of great importance to the Ovimbundu, because the feathers are used for decorating the head of a dead king. A medicine-man sometimes uses them for decoration when he is performing.

Ondonga. Is a little bird, which, like *onduva*, belongs to the royal family of birds.

Ukuku. A water bird.

Ocisandombunji. This is a bird which feeds on white ants.

Epandacokocoko. This is a bird (*Geocichla litsipsirupa*) whose cry tells the people of a village to make the guest house ready as strangers are coming.

Ocilonga. Is a beautiful yellow bird, an oriole (*Oriolus monarchus angolensis*).

Etua, singular; *ovatua*, plural. A species of bustard.

Etioko. A small bird of the plains (*Anthus leucophrys*).

Okakelekele. This is the Spur-wing Plover (*Hoplopterus armatus*), a large bird which lives on flat land near rivers.

Ocikandi. An unidentified bird. My informant said, "*Ocikandi* can cry in the same way as any other bird."

Okakonganyala. This is a bird somewhat like a pigeon but larger. It has long legs and is able to run well.

Undolo. A small spotted bird which always looks in the direction of the sun.

Omiapia. This is a swallow.

Ocikungumiapia. My informant said, "This bird is like *omiapia* but larger."

Ossupui. "He has a crest on his head and when he sings rain is coming."

Esunguagulute. This bird has a long beak. It lays eggs on the ground., The bird is as big as a man's fist.

Omanula. A woodpecker (family Picidae).

Okangonga. Has a white breast spotted with black; the head is blue.

Ocinjonjo. This is a little bird having a long beak which is used to probe into flowers.

Kossolokuta. A little black bird which makes a small fine nest.

Ocituku. A river bird. These birds go about in flocks.

Ongombo. A small yellow bird.

Epilili. A yellow bird rather larger than *ongombo*. This bird is kept in cages very cleverly made of reeds by small boys. The birds are caught by smearing a sticky substance on the branches of trees.

Ocikenge. Agapornis rosecollis. A small green parrot.

Okalusondonjovo. Is to be seen at the time of *onjovo* (spring). These birds fly in flocks.

A description of bird-calls illustrates a method of reasoning by analogy. This results in a transference of human thoughts and emotions to animals, a process which gives animal fables their strong

538
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3. Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

538 825 appeal. For example, the pigeon says, *Tu kolela oku iva* ("We believe in stealing"), and the following are further instances of the same kind.

Ocinganja is a bird which has several calls. Early in the year the female says as she looks at the newly hatched brood, "This year I have borne white children." Later the little birds grow black feathers. Then the mother cries, "Each year disappointment." Sometimes the female says to the cock bird, "A stick has stuck in my eye. I wonder whether it will make a growth there." The bird is probably the Black Flycatcher (*Melaenornis pammelaina*).

Epandacokocoko says, "Where will the guests stay? Where? Where? Where?" This is an unfailing intimation that strangers will visit the village.

Omanula. This is another bird which announces the approach of strangers by saying, "*Akombe! Akombe! Akombe!*" ("Guests! Guests! Guests!") Two birds are supposed to carry on a dialogue.

Sankanjuele says, "He who has eaten should leave the rest for the important ones," meaning himself.

Ondonga answers, "Do you mean me? The way you scold hurts me to my heart."

Ungolombia. The male and female birds *ungolombia* are about to cross a stream. The female says, "I am wearing four yards of cloth," meaning that she will get wet. The husband says, three times, "If you are wearing four yards of cloth, why do you not cross at the source of the river?"

Omboyo says, "When I lay my eggs on the ground, the white ants destroy them." The call continues, "When I lay them up high, *kalupamba* steals them." *Omboyo* cries, "Such hardship, goodness gracious me!" The exclamation is "*A nai we,*" literally, "O my mother!"

Kocukuku the Barn Owl (*Typo alba*) and his mate speak together. The female says, "*Cimuku,* do you eat rats?" He answers, "I do not eat them, they have tails."

Ungungu says, "No big animal lays eggs, so the crocodile must be a bird, too."

Ocimbamba (night hawk) may be heard on moonlight nights saying, "O lion, here are the people."

Ekuti says, "My child is gone to *Koputu.*" *Koputu,* in Umbundu, means a far off place. Possibly *Koputu* is a corruption of Oporto. This bird makes a monotonous and continuous cry from sunrise to sunset.

Epumumu (hornbills) are large black birds. The female says, "I'm going, I'm going, I'm going to our village." The male replies, "Don't go, don't go, the rain has come; let us plant."

Katendipanga. This bird is quiet until September, the month in which rain begins to fall. Then the bird says, "Save! Save! Save!" He means this as a warning to people who eat their corn instead of saving some for seed. The seed should be sown in October when the rains have begun. The derivation of the name of this bird is important. *Okutenda,* to count; *ovipanga,* the rows of corn in a field.

Kalusundanjovo. The female bird says, "Let's throw away the big drum." The male answers, "When we have thrown it away, what shall we do for dances?"

821 Observations of the weather are of importance in fixing dates for sowing and reaping; such dates are the base of time reckoning. Rainfall is important where cattle are kept, and a knowledge of the stars is of service to hunters and caravan leaders when following unfamilliar routes.

[789] The weather is thought to be controlled to some extent by the *ocimbanda* ("medicine-man") and his performances. The rain-

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

maker's dance seen at Ngongo, a village of Ngalangi in east-central Angola, will be described in dealing with the *ocimbanda* (chapter IX).

No man thinks that the course of the sun can be altered, but there seems to be a hope that the setting of the sun may be delayed. A man who is likely to be overtaken by darkness breaks a piece from an ant hill. This fragment is placed in the forked branch of a tree while the supplicant says, "Sun, wait a little while for me."

Months are reckoned by observation of the moon. The new moon is *osai* ("moon") *yokaliye* ("new"). There is no word for half moon. The phrase for full moon is *osai ya tunga ohumba*. *Ohumba* means "basket"; therefore the idea appears to be that the full moon is round like the big basket used for field work.

A star is called *olumbungululu*. To describe a shooting star, the word *luenda* ("it goes") is added. The large bright morning star is *tanda*. Another bright star is *tielele*. Three bright stars in a line are the hunter, the dog, and the quarry. The three stars are *ukongo* ("hunter"), *lombua* ("the dog"), *locinyama* ("the animal").

An eclipse of the sun is *uteke vutanya*. The former word means "night," the latter word means "daylight." Hence the meaning is "night in daylight."

Small mammals are captured in cane traps or stunned with blunt wooden arrows. The pursuit of such animals is a pastime for boys who thereby receive their early training in hunting. Rats are used as food after being boiled and roasted. This fact accounts for interest in the following small mammals.

Umbili. This is a big black river rat, the largest of the water rats.

Ocifelefele. A big gray water rat (*Cricetomys?*), not so large as *umbili*.

Kaleñe. A river rat something like the preceding one in appearance. *Kaleñe* can stay in the water for a longer period than that endured by *ocifelefele*.

Epeke. This is a bush rat which is light gray in color.

Ekolonjonjo. This rat stays in the bush. It builds a nest in an ant hill from which it comes out only at night. The color is gray.

Elima (*Epomophorus*). This is the name given to the fruit bat. The word *elima* means "not one thing and not another." Thus *elima* is the word applied to a mulatto; he is not a Negro, not a white man.

Osili (*Rhabdomys*). This is a large light brown mouse having white stripes on his back.

Ongenge. A mouse.

Epengue. A black rat.

Ocipili. A mouse with a long thin nose, probably a shrew.

Osinge. This is a very fat mouse.

Nakalongaka. This very small mouse makes a hole around which he piles grass to conceal the entrance.

Onjomboloka (*Lemniscomys*). A mouse with a stripe on his back.

Kandoti (*Dendromus*). A very little mouse something like *nakalongaka*.

825 Observation of reptiles is a necessary self-protection as there are many poisonous snakes. The flesh of the python is eaten. Snake-
[524] skin and lizard-skin are occasionally used; for example, in covering a round, hard fruit in order to make a ball for playing a game.

When collecting lizards and snakes I found that each kind had a well-known name, though there was occasional disagreement among the men consulted.

Ocivangoko is a lizard (*Agama planiceps*) about ten inches long whose tail is covered with sharp spines. This reptile has colors of bright blue, red, and orange. *Ovangu* is a large spinous gray lizard (*Agama atricoll*). *Ekangala* (*Gerrhosaurus nigrolineatus*) is a brilliantly colored lizard which burrows deeply into the ground.

Olutanjila is a long slender green snake which hides in trees to capture birds. *Ombandanjila* is a long gray-backed snake with a light green belly. The generic name for snake is *onjoha*. The python is *omoma*. The chameleon (*eloñailo*) seems to be feared, as the men and boys refuse to touch a dead one but always move it with sticks. There is a proverb to the effect that the chameleon though slow always gets there. The refusal to touch even dead reptiles is due to an exaggerated fear of being bitten. I could find no other reason.

824 Trees are of importance in connection with building houses and
313 wood-carving. The qualities of different timbers are well known to the Ovimbundu. For the main part, the collection of medicinal plants and their uses will be described in connection with the medicine-man. The following are the most common trees which are of economic importance.

Usia (pronounced *oosha*). This tree has an edible fruit the size of a walnut. The kernel is valued as a food.

Ombula. This tree provides wood which burns readily. The small skin-covered stools to be found in every hut are often made from this wood.

Ukengo. The fruit has a hard rind.

[757] *Owindo*. This tree has a small acid fruit from which a medicine is made for the cure of painful menstruation.

Usilosilo. The leaf is compound and palmate. The fruit is black.

Usiambiambia. Bears a little red, oval fruit.

Usole. Has a large red fruit.

Usombo. Grows near streams. It has a fruit like that of *okulakula*, but smaller.

[223] *Ukuliungu*. Has a fruit like the berry of a coffee plant. The fruit is used for making mucilage which is used for capturing small birds.

Omanda. When this tree is small, the wood is springy, and is therefore useful for making bows. The wood of the older trees is burned for preparing charcoal which is used in the blacksmith's fire.

Onundu. This is an erect tree having no branches on the lower part. The wood is extensively used in building native huts.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

105
182

The inquiry then turns to occupations which indicate that sex dichotomy of labor is a fundamental principle of tribal life. In connection with the details of food supply and occupation, ritual acts are prominent, and in association with these the functions of the medicine-man are important.

Cultural liaisons are again illustrated when studying domestic animals, for this inquiry leads to a consideration of the social and economic importance of cattle, which are used in ritual connected with the death and burial of kings.

These are but a few instances indicating the way in which lines of investigation converge, though they may appear to be distinct. In fact the very division of a monograph into chapters is misleading in its suggestion of distinct divisions of tribal life, whose parts are actually a psychological unity.

When accompanying boys and men during their food-collecting and hunting expeditions a wealth of nature lore and a richness of vocabulary were discovered, and a vocabulary of one hundred and thirty words comprising names of birds, reptiles, mammals, and plants was prepared. Species are carefully distinguished, to such a degree that discussions respecting the correct native names for similar species tend to be prolonged and humorous.

825
182
105

When I realized the closeness with which the native observes the habits of animals, there was no difficulty in understanding why folklore stories of animals are so popular and so amusing in their descriptions of animal behavior. In addition to its associations with nature study, folklore reveals standards of conduct and processes of rationalization.

In collecting names of birds and their cries, and while recording hunting customs, I was informed of the bird Onjimbi which flies at night to give the sound of death to those who will not see the morning. Then there is a nocturnal bird called Esuvi which is able to catch spirits of the dead who are active at night. A spirit so caught dies a second death, but what this means I could not immediately discover. Later a man said he was sick because Esuvi had caught the spirit of his grandfather. This implies the belief that an ancestral spirit is a guardian whose function ends when a second death is experienced.

Study of natural history sometimes leads to a point of importance in social procedure. There is a bird Onduva whose feathers are used for decorating the head of a dead king and for embellishing the person of a medicine-man; the feathers may not be used in any other

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

105
182
825

way. Such instances as these came to light when my primary intention was a study of the use of wooden arrows for killing birds.

An inquiry about the names of trees and the use of timbers led to the topic of making and using wooden figures for magical purposes. Woodcraft, wood-carving, and religion are associated.

There is no fallacy so great as that of supposing that data may be collected and retained in mutually exclusive divisions. For example, a study of proverbs leads to native ideas concerning government, succession to office, and standards of conduct. The Ovimbundu say, "A turtle cannot climb on a tree stump, some one has to place it there." What is the meaning of this proverb? There are some men who occupy positions for which they have no ability; such men have been chosen through influence. The normal successor to chieftainship and kingship is the eldest son of the deceased man's principal wife, but if this rightful successor is stupid, some other son will be chosen. Yet the foolish youth may have friends who see their own advantage in having a weak ruler; they therefore combine to place him in office. The turtle has been placed on the tree stump, since it could not climb there.

In addition, folklore shows projection of the mentality of human beings into the lives of animals. Bird cries, with their supposed calls and answers, indicate that the birds have their family relationships involving strife, love, jealousy, and generosity. To the Ovimbundu, birds are a feathered human community.

538
829
182

Proverbs reveal a philosophy which is expressed by the German *Weltanschauung*. "If you are full of food, do not climb on a leopard's back; the leopard may be hungry." This means that one should not be foolishly exalted through good fortune. "You cannot tie a buck's head in a cloth; the horns will stick out," expresses the idea that crime cannot be concealed. "Hot water does not burn a house, and cold water does not make mush," is a sarcastic reply to one who boasts of things he cannot do. A riddle may express a philosophical train of thought. "What is it that lives while it dies and dies while it lives?" This is the log of wood the end of which is from time to time pushed farther into the fire. Like a human life, the log is being slowly consumed while yet living. Such examples as these call attention to a welding of thought, language, nature lore, and ideas that regulate conduct.

183
462
105

In considering food supply and occupations, division of labor on a sex basis is clear. Social sanctions have determined the appro-

5: Hambly E-5 (1929-30)1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

OCCUPATIONAL RITUAL, BELIEF, AND CUSTOM AMONG THE OVIMBUNDU

By WILFRID DYSON HAMBLY

[114] WHEN leader of the Frederick H. Rawson-Field Museum Expedition of 1929–30 one of my chief objects was the assembling of a representative collection of the arts and handicrafts of Angola, and particularly of the Ovimbundu who occupy the Benguela highlands.

121

[177] The Ovimbundu have been in contact with Europeans for three centuries at least, therefore I was interested to know to what extent daily avocations had become secularized. That a close connection has existed between the sacred and the profane in Negro tribes is well known, and the influence of spiritual beliefs and magical acts in every department of economic life, including agriculture, hunting, fishing, and handicrafts, has been established. But how durable is this dependence of economic life on magical acts and ancestral benediction? How soon does primitive economic life become commercialized on a European pattern?

Other observations of academic interest and practical value relate to division of labor between the sexes, specialization by age and natural aptitude; also the possibility of some callings being of an hereditary nature.

[101] My observations, which were made chiefly in the regions of Bailundu, Elende near Cuma, and Ngalangi, are conveniently classified under the headings of food supply, handicrafts, medicine-men, and education.

FOOD SUPPLY

824 At the foundation of economic life is nature lore, which among the male
825 population of the Ovimbundu is so detailed and extensive that the knowledge has given rise to a large vocabulary. The highly specialized acquaintance with trees, plants, birds, mammals, and reptiles on the part of most of the men was a surprise to me. Such information was commonly shared by males, and was in no way peculiar to the professional hunter.

I was easily able to collect a list of fifty birds which are readily distinguished by boys (who shoot them with blunt wooden arrows), and all men seemed familiar with forty species of trees, whose timbers, barks, and fruits were distinguished and named. Boys were exceptionally well acquainted with small mammals; including several kinds of rats and mice, which are trapped, boiled, and eaten. For Field Museum I made a collection of snakes and lizards; a task which again showed the native power of observation and adequacy of vocabulary. Some reptiles, whose re-

5: Hambly E-5 (1929-30) 1934 FP 13 Mbundu FP13

824 semblance for a time caused confusion in my mind, were well known to be distinct; though occasionally a prolonged and serious argument would arise
● 825 among the old men respecting the correct Umbundu names for two similar snakes.

The cries of birds are interpreted in terms of human conversation: thus the female hornbill says to her mate, "I'm going; I'm going; I'm going to our village;" to which the male replies, "Don't go. The rain has come; let us plant." Another bird says, "Where will the guests stay? where? where? where?" This is an intimation that strangers will visit the village. All animals play a part in folk stories: human beings when introduced are usually of secondary importance.

Nature lore is, of course, fundamental to industries, since the artisans must know the best timbers for particular purposes. Thus certain woods yield the best charcoal for a blacksmith's forge; other woods are essential for house building because the timbers resist attacks of termites; again certain trees yield bark for making rope; while other woods are used for carving animals and household utensils.

[462] I am not sure of the extent to which women participate in nature lore; but certainly their knowledge cannot equal that of the men, since women are concerned chiefly with agriculture, domestic work, care of children, and collection of firewood. Yet women and little children are collectors. I have seem many of them together gathering caterpillars which are to be made into soup. Women know the plants that will yield dyes for basketry, and from women some of the bird calls were obtained. The conversation of men bears on their occupations and the nature lore fundamental to these; therefore women must learn, though perhaps only by unconscious absorption.

224 In connection with a study of food supply the occupation of hunting comes most closely to the general nature lore mentioned above. Here a distinction should be made between hunting as a general occupation for males, and hunting by a professional who gives his life to the work. The only occasion on which women and children assist hunters is during a communal hunt, when all the inhabitants of a village fire the dry grass and aid in the capture of game by shouting and driving the frightened animals.

A professional hunter is usually called ukongo, more rarely onyanga. The occupation is not hereditary. A boy has to serve two years with a professional hunter before his initiation. The principal guests at the initiation feast are professional hunters, who alone may dance, though a miscellaneous company is present. The boy who seeks initiation is required to keep quite still until he feels the "spirit on his head;" then he distributes meat to the people present. The meat used at the feast is that of antelope shot by

5: Hambly E-5 (1929-30) 1934 FP 13 Mbundu FP13

224 hollow chamber. I removed a thin slab of stone which formed an entrance
764 to a tomb of this kind and observed within two skeletons lying supine. On the top of the cairns were skulls of animals killed by the hunter. I noted one instance of the burial of a hunter's dog under a cairn of stones.

825 Three birds are protected by a prohibition. Esuvi is a bird which has
794 power to steal the souls of the dead, so making them die a second death. As usual, no direct explanation was given concerning this second death, but an explanation came later, quite fortuitously. For instance, an old man said he was sick because esuvi had stolen the spirit of his grandfather. This statement is logical, since welfare depends on a beneficent interest of dead ancestors, and it is evident that dying a second death prevents a spirit from exercising a benign influence over the living. Other protected birds are one which supplies feathers from which the decorations of kings and medicine-men are made, and one whose night cry is a warning of death in a village.

226 In fishing, a division of labor is recognized: men use a rod and line, while women drag baskets against the stream or use poison in slow, shallow water. The night before poison is to be used for fishing, husband and wife must avoid intercourse, since intimacy of this kind would make the fish stay together at the bottom of the river. A man who has prepared his rod and line, by transfixing a grasshopper and attaching it to a thin piece of bark,
[539] sings a song which is of the nature of a spell. He says:

> "O fish come and take your good thing.
> Do not send the little fish to spoil the good thing.
> Better you come and take the good thing with all your strength."

439 Up to half a century ago the Ovimbundu were renowned traders whose caravans penetrated deeply into the Congo region and even to the east side of Africa. It is natural, therefore, that some ritual should be connected with
[443] such an important enterprise. At the present day caravans may be seen, but these are local, and most of the carriers are found to be taking their maize, beans, and beeswax to traders' stores. I believe women did not accompany the transcontinental caravans of early days, but today women may be seen in line with the other carriers. Their loads are lighter, being on the average thirty pounds as compared with sixty pounds for a man. Children also carry small loads in the caravan.

439 Ngonga, my chief informant, said that in former times no caravan
787 leader would set out without having consulted the preserved head of a de-
[643] ceased king. Even at present the corpse of a king is suspended by the neck and twisted until the head is severed. The head is sewn in oxhide and preserved in a box. The ancient caravan custom consisted of taking the box